

06/28/ DISSEM PER SALT#1

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FRP: .2, ., ., .6, .

STATE

ACTION: NONE INFO: ODPS-S, RF, FILE, DDST, C/CRG-2, CR/U, D/OSR,
D/OWI, DDO/DO, NFAC, NIO/SALT, NIO/SP, NIO/USSR, ORPA/USSR, (14/W)

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TOR: 181428Z NOV 78

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ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH
TSTU690
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DE RUEHMO #8221/01 3221411
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O 181407Z NOV 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9267
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE 0267
INFO RUFH LG/AMCONSUL LENINGRAD 4199
RUDKRB/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 4689
RUFHEB/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0802
RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN 7112
RUDKAR/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST 5053
RUDKDA/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST 4412
RUFHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 8313
RUFH MU/AMCONSUL MUNICH 4240
RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 9708
RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 6804
RUDKRP/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 4992
RUDKSA/AMEMBASSY SOFIA 4336
RUFHJA/USMISSION USBERLIN 4578
RUFHNA/USMISSION USNATO 6331
RUDKRW/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 5881
RUSNAAA/CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
RUDORRA/USNMR SHAPE BE
RHFRAAB/CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE
RUFDAAB/CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE
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USSALITWO

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, CU, UR
SUBJECT: INITIAL SOVIET PRESS COMMENT ON MIG-23
DEPLOYMENT IN CUBA

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1. PRAVDA NOVEMBER 18 CARRIES INITIAL SOVIET PRESS COMMENT ON EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN REPORTING DEPLOYMENT OF MIG-23 AIRCRAFT TO CUBA. SIX-PARAGRAPH ARTICLE APPEARS IN ROUTINE FORMAT ON INTERNATIONAL PAGE UNDER TITL "THEY ARE BLOWING SOAP BUBBLES," AND IS AUTHORED BY PSEUDONYMOUS A. PETROV. ASSUME FULL FBIS TRANSLATION AVAILABLE TO ADDRESSEES.
2. ACCORDING TO PETROV, THE WASHINGTON POST COLUMN REPORTS THAT MIG-23 AIRPLANES HAVE APPEARED IN CUBA AND MAINTAINS THAT THIS APPARENTLY CONTRADICTS THE SOVIET-AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING OF 1962. SUCH ASSERTIONS, PETROV WRITES, FROM BEGINNING TO END ARE "GROUNDLESS AND PROVOCATIVE".
3. AFTER IMPUGNING MOTIVATION OF EVANS AND NOVAK, ARTICLE STATES THAT "ACCORDING TO THEIR BASIC CHARACTERISTICS, THE AIRCRAFT (ABOUT WHICH EVANS AND NOVAK WRITE) IS OF THE SAME TYPE WHICH HAVE BEEN AND ARE IN CUBA, ARE AND REMAIN ESSENTIAL FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE LEGAL INTERESTS OF THIS SOVEREIGN STATE". NO QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE SOVIET-AMERICAN AGREEMENT OF 1962 THEREFORE ARISE. THEY CANNOT ARISE, THE ARTICLE CONTINUES, BECAUSE THE SOVIET UNION "HAS FIRMLY ADHERED AND ADHERES TO ITS PART OF THE UNDERSTANDING," PROCEEDING FROM THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE U.S. WILL DO LIKEWISE. PRAVDA ARTICLE NOTES THAT THE CONSTRUCTIVE POSITION OF CUBA IS ALSO WELL KNOWN IN THIS REGARD.
4. EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN IS SAID TO BE "INSPIRED" BY PERSONS FROM THE RANKS OF THOSE OPPOSED TO EQUAL AND MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS SOVIET-AMERICAN COOPERATION. COLUMN IS DESIGNED, ACCORDING TO ARTICLE, TO EVOKE A NEW WAVE OF SUSPICION TOWARDS THE USSR AT A TIME WHEN THE STRATEGIC ARMS NEGOTIATIONS HAVE ENTERED THEIR "DECISIVE PHASE". THE PRAVDA ARTICLE WINDS UP BY DECLARING THERE IS ONLY ONE CONCLUSION (ABOUT THIS MATTER) WHICH CORRESPONDS TO "THE REALITIES": NAMELY, THAT COMMON SENSE AND THE INTERESTS OF THE NATIONS OUGHT TO HAVE PRIORITY OVER THE "MERCENARY INTERESTS OF THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX AND THOSE CIRCLES

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WHICH EVANS, NOVAK AND THEIR KIND, SERVE".

5. COMMENT: AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, KOSYGIN TOLD THE MEMBERS OF CODEL RIBICOFF/BELLMON ON NOVEMBER 16 THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS NEVER VIOLATED THE 1962 UNDERSTANDING (MOSCOW 28094 NOTAL). THE MIG-23 ISSUE AROSE AGAIN LATER ON NOVEMBER 16 DURING THE CODEL'S PLENARY DISCUSSION WITH SUPREME SOVIET DEPUTIES. BOTH CANDIDATE POLITBURO MEMBER PONOMAREV AND CPSU INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR ZAMYATIN ADDRESSED THEMSELVES TO THE SUBJECT AT THAT MEETING, BUT THEIR REMARKS SEEMED OFF-THE-CUFF AND THEY BASICALLY SOUGHT TO MISREPRESENT THE STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S COMMENTS TO MEAN THAT THE DEPARTMENT KNEW THE AIRCRAFT WERE NOT NUCLEAR-CAPABLE (TO BE REPORTED SEPTEL).

6. WHILE THE PRAVDA ARTICLE, MOSCOW'S FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE ISSUE, THUS ECHOES KOSYGIN'S DENIAL OF A VIOLATION, THE ARTICLE LEAVES THE SOVIETS CONSIDERABLE ROOM FOR ADJUSTING THEIR PUBLIC POSITION IN FUTURE DAYS. IT IS SOMEWHAT CAUTIOUS, BOTH IN FORMAT AND SUBSTANCE. THUS IT AVOIDS ANY EXPLICIT CHARACTERIZATION OF THE DEFENSIVE/OFFENSIVE ROLE OF THE AIRCRAFT. IT IS SILENT ON THE QUESTION OF POSSIBLE NUCLEAR CAPABILITY

END OF MESSAGE

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RR RUEAIIB
 ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH
 TSTU420
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 DE RUEHMO #8124/02 3211548
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 FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9234
 INFO RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN 7108
 RUFHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 1441
 RUFHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 8309
 RUFHGL/AMCONSUL LENINGRAD 4190
 RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 9703
 RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 6800
 RUFHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 7912
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 28124

USSALTTWO

USEEC

MOSCOW THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR REPORTED AT THE QUADRIPARTITE MEETING THAT GROMYKO FELT SLIGHTED WHEN HE WAS NOT RECEIVED AT THE AIRPORT BY FOREIGN MINISTER GUIRINGAUD (EVEN THOUGH IT IS THE LATTER'S PRACTICE NOT TO RECEIVE VISITORS THIS WAY). DETERMINED TO EXACT "RECIPROCITY", GROMYKO DECIDED NOT TO ATTEND THE OPERA PERFORMANCE IN HIS HONOR. FOLLOWING FRENCH PLEADING HE AGREED TO ATTEND FOR AN ACT, AND ENDED UP STAYING THE ENTIRE PERFORMANCE. THE VISIT ENDED AS IT BEGAN, HOWEVER, WITH GROMYKO SLIGHTLY MIFFED THAT HE WAS NOT SEEN OFF AT THE AIRPORT BY ANY ONE FROM THE QUAI ALTHOUGH THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR WAS PRESENT.

5. THE SOVIET DESIRE TO CAST THE VISIT AS A STEP TOWARDS REALIZING MOSCOW'S DISARMAMENT AGENDA WAS

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REFLECTED IN THE FOLLOW-UP PRESS COMMENT HERE. PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT KHARLANOV, WRITING IN PRAVDA OCTOBER 30, SUGGESTED THAT DISARMAMENT IS THE "CRUCIAL PROBLEM" FOR EUROPE AND NEITHER FRANCE NOR THE USSR "CAN REMAIN INDIFFERENT IN THE FACE OF WEAPONS, INCLUDING NUCLEAR, STOCKPILED ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT" OR TO THE FACT THAT THE VIENNA TALKS "HAVE MADE PRACTICALLY NO PROGRESS." WHILE APPLAUDING FRANCE'S RETURN TO THE GENEVA DISARMAMENT TALKS, KHARLANOV POINTEDLY OBSERVED THAT "IN THE FUTURE, FRANCE, JUST AS OTHER NUCLEAR POWERS, COULD MAKE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE REDUCTION OF THE STRATEGIC NUCLEAR-MISSILE ARSENALS." THE SOVIET PRESS CONTINUES TO AVOID ANY REFERENCE TO THE FRENCH EUROPEAN DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE PROPOSAL, AND THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE OTHER COMMENT ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PARIS TALKS.

6. AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF WHAT STRIKES US AS RESERVED COVERAGE OF THE PARIS TALKS, IZVESTIYA NOVEMBER 14 PUBLISHED A STRONG CRITICISM OF FRENCH TELEVISION FOR A "FRESH ANTI-SOVIET SORTIE" ON THE SHOW "APOSTROPHES" NOVEMBER 10. WRITTEN BY "POLITICAL OBSERVER" BABENKO, IZVESTIYA COMPLAINS THAT "SLANDERERS" OF THE SOVIET UNION (ENGLISH LANGUAGE TASS MENTIONS BUKOVSKY AND "A CERTAIN JEAN AND NINIA KEHAYAN, INTRODUCED AS MEMBERS OF PCF", BUT THE SPECIFIC NAMES ARE OMITTED IN IZVESTIYA) WERE GIVEN A PLATFORM BY "NATIONAL TELEVISION WHICH IS A MONOPOLY OF THE FRENCH STATE." WAS THIS A REGRETTABLE MISCALCULATION OR A DELIBERATE ACT, BABENKO ASKS. MORE LIKE THE LATTER, HE INDICATES, JUDGING FROM THE FACT THAT ONLY THREE DAYS THEREAFTER THESE SLANDERS WERE AGAIN AIRED, THIS TIME ON FRENCH RADIO. BABENKO CONCLUDES THAT "SOMEBODY IN PARIS" IS WORKING HARD TO INTERFERE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND SOVIET PEOPLES.

7. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SOVIET CRITICISM IS OF COURSE NOT SURPRISING BUT ITS TIMING IN THE

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GOVERNMENT PAPER SO SOON AFTER THE VISIT IS. IT
IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS WERE
PROVOKED TO REPLY TO FRENCH TELEVISION AND RADIO
MERELY BECAUSE OF TWO PROGRAMS. FOR WHATEVER
REASON, THE SOVIET EFFORT, SO VISIBLE BEFORE THE
VISIT, TO PUT THE BEST FACE ON RELATIONS WITH
PARIS, HAS APPARENTLY BEGUN TO FLAG. TOON

END OF MESSAGE

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